America's Press Says What It Thinks of "German Peace"

AT A MEETING of Russian, German and Austrian delegates at Brest-Litovsk the Germanic powers made a tentative "peace" offer in response to Russian suggestion, stipulating, however, that the proposal could be realized only in the event that all belligerents adhered to it.

It pretended to offer peace "without forcible annexations and indemnities," the question of subject nationalities that have not now political independence to be settled by each government and the peoples concerned individually. It demanded, however, the return of Germany's lost colonies, called for a Poland nominally "independent," but under Austrian supervision; and also contemplated the maintenance of German garrisons and large bodies of troops in Russian territory now occupied. It also developed later that in payment for the evacuation of Belgium and France Germany demanded the return of Palestine, Mesopotamia and Arabia, and even the restoration of Tripoli to Turkey. "Germany's fundamental aim," a Russian delegate, M. Pavlivich, is quoted as saying, "is to establish an economic union from Hamburg to the Persian Gulf."

The String at Least Is Real

—From *The New York Tribune*

At first the Bolsheviki seemed content, but at this writing there is evidence that even they have begun to realize the actual meaning of these peace terms, which were essentially a return to the "status quo ante," with certain German advantages added.

Outside of Russia the offer was regarded as an attempt to inveigle the Allies into a discussion of terms and also as a confession of fundamental German weakness, despite the truculence of its tone. It was not greeted enthusiastically in Germany, either.

The response of the press of the United States and Canada to the German peace offer as presented to the Russians is almost unanimous. It is also unusually emphatic as an expression of popular opinion. The verdict is that the offer is not one worthy of serious consideration, that it is fundamentally fraudulent, and that any peace built upon such a foundation would leave the whole war to be fought over again when Germany had regained her strength to try once more for world domination.

"The Allies," said "The Washington Post," speaking of the "peace delusion," "are anything but deluded. They see with eyes sharpened by the terrible danger. They are keenly alive to the nature and magnitude of their task. They realize the costly nature of the blunders they have made. Necessity drives them to new and untried expedients, but they are throwing away old prejudices and are quick to seize upon the advantage of timeliness. Every day brings the allied nations nearer together; every day widens the gulf between civilization and a dishonorable and unsafe peace. The German ruler and the German plotters boast and rave, but the allied forces of civilization work inexorably toward the doom of the system that strikes at freedom."

"We are in the war," said "The Boston Transcript," "and we shall stick to it until the war has the right result. No doubt a military decision is essential to the determination of that result. Very well—we shall win that decision."

"The menace of a German peace" was recognized by "The Toronto Globe," which quoted President Wilson's statement upon the declaration of war that German power "must be crushed."

Analyzing the true meaning of the offer "The New York Times" pointed out that—

> "The German peace terms are that the status quo ante be restored to Europe. The status quo ante is the thing that caused the present war and will cause more unless it be utterly destroyed. But the status quo ante will never be restored exactly as it was; for under that status there were some nations that did not enjoy the blessings of permanent conscription. England was one and the United States, Brazil, Canada, Argentina and Australia were among the others. These nations will not be caught napping again."

"The Teutonic menace to civilization must be eliminated," was the answer of "The Indianapolis News." "The Denver Rocky Mountain News" stigmatized favorable discussion of it as "peace chatter that softens a nation." "So far as the Allies are concerned," "The Daily Oklahoman" thought, "it is hardly likely the so-called peace terms will even provoke discussion." In the words of "The Colorado Springs Gazette":

Crazy Ophelia

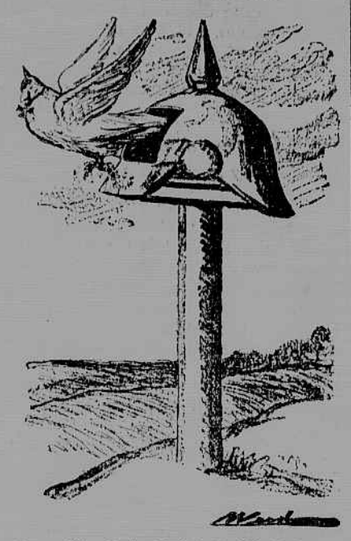
—From *The Baltimore Sun*

"Germany cannot buy peace from her allied foes to-day by material compensation for the damage they have sustained at her hands, nor by the evacuation of the territory she has invaded. There must come with the cessation of battle a sense of security over Europe that the carnage will not be renewed."

"The Houston Chronicle" found "the patronizing effrontery of the German proposition intolerable." "The Baltimore Sun" considered that "there is nothing chastened about the Prussian temper." "The Salem (Oregon) Capital Journal," under the caption, "Carthage Must Be Destroyed," saw in the situation the old battle over again, "Rome or Carthage," concluding that—

> "No matter what it costs in lives and treasure the world owes it to itself and to the generations to come to fight the present contest to a finish. Unless Prussianism is utterly destroyed the whole terrible war will sooner or later have to be fought over again."

The Same Old Dove-Cote



—From *The Philadelphia Public Ledger*

"The detestable German system," said "The Hartford Courant," "must be wiped out before there can be real peace."

It would be possible to fill many columns with similar extracts from the country's editorial pages and from expression of popular opinion in letters from readers. The answer is wellnigh unanimous—"Prussia must be destroyed" before the nations can talk of peace.

The only notable exceptions were found in "The New York Evening Post" and a few papers inclined toward pacifism, which correspond, measurably, to "The Manchester Guardian" in England. "The Post" saw in Count Czernin's offer something "which the Allies are bound to entertain."

"The San Francisco Chronicle" thought that the peace proposals make "a foundation, if not for negotiations, at least for talking about them." It demanded that all militarism, including "British navalism" and "our own" must be abolished along with German militarism. And "The New York American" saw in the Russian events a justification of Lord Lansdowne's proposal and called for further definition of Allied "war aims," adding:

His Master's Voice

—From *The Cheyenne State Leader*

"It is unbelievable that the German government would find the hardihood to reject fair and just offers of peace, for the simple reason that it is unbelievable that the German people would back up their government in rejecting such offers—and, contrary to much ignorant assertion and to much ill-informed belief, the German government could not carry on war a single week against the will of the German people."

The German-American press, for the most part, maintained a discreet silence or made colorless comment. "The New York Call" (Socialist) saw a confession of weakness for either side to offer peace terms, or even to "state its aims" as a peace preliminary, concluding:

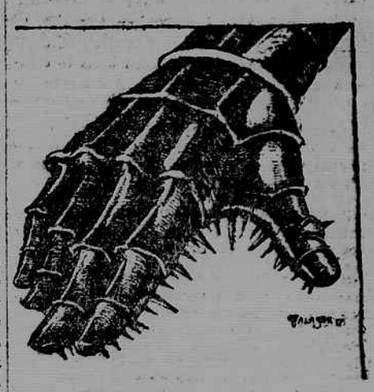
> "George Bernard Shaw couched all this in homely phrase when he stated that 'if Germany gets us down she will skin us alive; if we get Germany down we shall skin her alive.' And no pretence that this is otherwise will go with any of the European belligerents. They know each other too well."

The most widely quoted and most generally accepted expression of American opinion was that given by Mr. Frank H. Simonds in The Tribune, holding that the proposed terms were wholly "inadmissible," and that "with the Germany of the lying tongue and the brutal sword this world cannot make peace." Nothing short of a complete military victory, as a prerequisite, will do. After that is gained, at whatever cost, "the beginning of just peace is reparation, restitution, restoration." His conclusion was that "the civilized world is not yet prepared to play Little Red Riding Hood to the German wolf—not even at Bolsheviki invitation—and that is the sum total of what is now proposed."

Mr. Simonds, later discussing the question of the Baltic provinces, declared:

> "At no time since the World War began has there been any greater peril to the future peace of Europe than that which is inherent in the present peace proposals of the Germans to the Russians. Under the cover of Russian formulæ, purporting to give small races the right to choose their own political allegiance, the Germans are deliberately undertaking to create a barrier between the Slavs and the Baltic Sea and erect a German controlled state which shall contain all the Russian Baltic ports from Libau to Revel, including Pernau and Riga.
>
> "If the present German proposal be accepted by the Russians, who are utterly at the mercy of German agents in Russian ranks, 150,000,000 Russians will be deprived of all outlet upon the open waters, save on the Arctic and Pacific oceans, and Russia will be made industrially and economically a mere slave to Germany. Through her own ports of Danzig and Königsberg and through the ports of Libau and Riga, in the new state she is seeking to erect, Germany would control all Russian roads to the sea in the north, and through her mastery of the Turk at Constantinople she would dominate the Russian road to the Mediterranean. The slightest examination of the German proposal reveals its full purpose."

The Kaiser's Glad Hand



—From *The Chicago Herald*

His conclusion was this:

> "As for the German peace proposal, it is a colossal fraud. To be deceived by it is to permit Germany to win the war, and to win more than any German expected to win at any time between the Marne and the hour when Russia fell into chaos. We have, all of us, the Western nations, pledged ourselves to fight for the liberation of the subject nations. For us to listen to the present German proposals would be to betray 30,000,000 of Slavs, to turn them over to the German and the Austrian, to their present and our future ruin."

The War Has Done All Sorts of Things to British Newspapers

THE war has made a great difference to newspapers. This is, in fact, a truism. Of course war makes a difference in every department of life. And its effects upon newspapers would seem, in many respects, most patent of all. However, the matter invites careful analysis, and such analysis, so far as it applies to British journalism, is made in the December 27 issue of "The Nation," by Herbert W. Horwill, writing from London. Mr. Horwill says:

"There used to be a popular delusion that a war was a good thing for the papers. It solved what was commonly supposed to be an editor's chief problem—the difficulty of finding enough matter to fill its columns. This strange notion of the assistance given by a state of war to the prosperity of the newspaper press will scarcely survive the experience of the last three years. The most careless reader must have noticed the sore straits to which journalism has lately been put. Last week 'The Daily Chronicle' joined the long list of papers that have doubled their price, leaving us in London with no one-cent morning papers except 'The Daily News' and 'The Daily Express.'

"When the war broke out the first sufferers in the journalistic world were not the proprietors or editors, but the general contributors. Unless he could switch on his interests to military matters, the free lance or space writer found no market for his wares. Regular members of the staff who were responsible for sections relating to literature or social questions or the fashions were confronted by the sudden failure of any demand for what they could supply. Reporters discovered that nobody wanted any accounts of lectures or meetings. After a time these difficulties righted themselves in large measure. The public attention could not be wholly and continuously absorbed in fighting, and the mere desire for some relief from the pressure of military concerns brought about a restoration in the usual paragraphs about the affairs of everyday life, though not by any means to their previous scale of importance.

"As the war went on its burden fell more and more heavily upon newspaper publishers and editors. They were hampered by the increasing scarcity and cost of raw material, by the difficulty of transport and distribution through the depleted train services, and by the reduction of their editorial and mechanical staffs through enlistment and conscription. The rise in the price of print paper has proved the most serious handicap of all. In announcing its proposed change 'The Chronicle' reported the other day that paper had gone up 50 per cent since August, 1914. Early in 1916 the government found it necessary to control the supply. In order to save tonnage, the importation of paper, wood pulp and other paper-making materials was prohibited except under special licenses to be issued by a paper commission, and purchasers of these various kinds of material were rationed on the basis of their 1914 consumption.

"At first the ratio permitted was two-thirds, but in the case of paper itself, as distinct from paper-making materials, it was afterward reduced to one-half and, later still, to one-third. These limitations have been severely felt. At the last annual meeting of the Newspaper Press Fund Lord Burnham, the proprietor of 'The Daily Telegraph,' went so far as to say that the newspapers had been the biggest sufferers from government regulations—more than any other trade in the country. The growing scarcity of paper has been accompanied by a marked decline in its quality. Not only newspaper printers but book printers have to be content in these days with whatever kind of stuff they can get. You will notice that in the current issues of even some of the standard books of reference the ink runs if you try to make a note or an interlineation. It has not smoothed matters to discover that the government itself has been one of the chief offenders as regards the waste of good material.

"Not long ago there lay on a wharf at Bermondsey Wall a huge stack of more than fifty tons of printed matter—posters, handbills, official forms, etc.—which had been discarded by the abortive National Service Propaganda. There were even dumped there, ready for pulping, massive quarto calf-bound ledgers of the finest quality paper, for which an ordinary firm would pay from $15 to $20, and in which not more than twenty or thirty pages had been used. It is fair to say that at last the authorities seem to have awakened to the necessities of economy. The Controller of the Stationery Office has decided to discontinue the use of foolscap for official correspondence, and civil servants have been instructed to write on both sides, to use narrow spacing when they employ the typewriter and to be sparing in their consumption of envelopes.

"There were two obvious means by which the newspapers could meet the new situation. They could provide against the increased cost of raw material either by decreasing their size or by raising their price. Many eight-page daily papers were cut down to four pages. Unnecessary portraits and illustrations were omitted. 'Special' articles, which used to occupy a whole column, were compressed into half that length. One of the most awkward problems was how to carry out this condensation without sacrificing too much of the income derived from advertisements, and the task of allotting space in a satisfactory proportion must have caused anxious consultations in many offices. 'The Spectator' solved the problem by decreasing its total number of pages, allowing the same amount of reading matter as before, and reducing the space allotted to advertisements, but with a rise in its scale of advertising charges.

"The reduction in size of so many papers is generally recognized as a misfortune. Nowadays, for instance, there is only one paper that can find room to give the casualty lists in full. A few months ago the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Munitions publicly regretted that the shortage of paper had limited the space the press could give to the consideration of labor questions—e. g., the problem of dilution—and had been a serious handicap to the government in keeping the nation informed of the considerations that had guided their policy.

"The expedient of a rise in price has been widely adopted. It was stated last June that since the beginning of the war 72 dailies and 445 weeklies had made this change. 'The Times' raised its price first from 2 cents to 3 cents, and later to 4 cents. 'The Morning Post,' 'The Daily Mail,' 'The Daily Mirror,' 'The Daily Sketch' and several of the leading provincial dailies have gone up 100 per cent. Some of the higher priced papers have encouraged the formation of reading circles in order that their influence might not suffer although their circulation might decline. 'The Queen,' the leading weekly paper devoted to women's interests, accompanied the raising of its price from sixpence to a shilling by devising a 'linked subscriptions' scheme. A copy is sent out in a double postal wrepper with two addresses and two stamps. It is posted on Friday to one address and is transmitted by the first reader the next Tuesday to the other. The trouble is that most people prefer to be the second member of such a pair, in order that they may be able to keep the paper. There have consequently been many more applications for the second subscription than for the first. In a great many camps, of course, papers have both reduced their size and raised their price. They have all promised—and they all doubtless intend—to resume the old size and price after the war, but one may reasonably doubt whether circumstances will not be too strong for them, in view of the general scarcity of all kinds of raw material that is likely to persist for many years after peace returns.

"A minor saving in paper has been effected by many papers by means of their refusal to accept 'returns' any longer from the news agents. Among the weekly papers, especially, the practice of an annual postal subscription has been much less usual in England than in America. A large proportion of the circulation is made through news agents, copies being sent out by the publishers 'for sale or return.' In order to lessen the waste of unsold copies, the publishers are now limiting their output to the number that has been definitely ordered, and the news agents, with a few exceptions—mainly the railway bookstalls—are accordingly ceasing to cater for the casual purchaser. The government has compelled a further economy by prohibiting the 'contents bills,' which were previously so prominent a feature of the English newspaper business. It so happened that in the very first week in which this prohibition was in force there occurred the fall of Bagdad and the Russian revolution—events that would have given an exceptional opportunity to the specialists who used to prepare these placards. The news venders who ply their trade at the street corners have had to devise methods of their own to supply the gap. Some of them have used slates and others have announced the events of the day by writing notices in chalk on boards or on the sidewalk.

"There have been a few instances—very few—of the amalgamation of two local weekly papers that would have been unable to survive separately. The most remarkable case is the union of two Middlesex weeklies of opposite political opinions and traditions. Many journals—especially trade papers, denominational organs and publications of societies—have collapsed altogether. While there has been this heavy mortality rate among papers already in existence, a few new papers have been started and have gained an enormous circulation. Some clever exploiters of the public mind were acute enough to notice that the war had killed Sabbatarianism.

"When Sunday school teachers, with the approval of their ecclesiastical superiors, were spending the day of rest in making munitions, and when everybody was as keen to get war news on Sunday mornings as on other days, it was clear that the religious objection to Sunday papers had been greatly weakened. At least three new Sunday papers have been started to take advantage of this change of feeling. One of them began with a million copies and has since gone beyond two and a half millions.

"These newcomers began their operations before there were any restrictions on the supply of raw material, and they were able to procure a good deal of paper by buying up licenses from persons who did not happen to require all the material to which they were entitled. In April last, however, a new regulation was issued prohibiting the publication of any new newspaper without special permission, so there will be no opportunity for any further ventures of this kind."

Picking Up Some Important Threads Around the National Capital

Guns, Overcoats and Rags

Washington, January 3.

BY WAY of contrast with the methods of the Committee on Manufactures the investigation of military shortcomings by the Committee on Military Affairs is notable for the absence of partisanship and the sincere effort to ascertain the truth and to rectify abuses. According to General Sharpe's testimony, a typical army contract scandal seems to have been unearthed in the matter of profits from rags.

It appears that Charles Eisenman is vice-president of a committee of the advisory committee of the Council of National Defence and approved this contract, and that Samuel Kaplan, one of whose brothers is financially interested in the rag-picking contract and another brother treasurer of a Connecticut woollen mill commandeered by the government, is a member of the same committee; that there were huge profits in the contract and that its cancellation, following the first disclosures recently made, was bitterly resented by Eisenman and the first Kaplan.

These gentlemen are yet to be heard in their own defence and have entered denials of General Sharpe's allegations. But it was also brought out that this committee had delayed in accepting an offer made in April by the woollen manufacturers of Boston, by which, according to Senator Weeks's estimate, the sum of $150,000,000 was lost by the government on account of the increased prices that had to be accepted later.

Doubtless here is the root of the trouble about supplying the cantonments with uniforms and overcoats, the price of neglect finally being assessed in human life. The hope is freely expressed that of the men who have been trusted by the government to act for it in the matter of contracts for army supplies few have yielded to the temptation to mix profits with their patriotism.

General Crozier occupied the stand again Monday and was patiently heard while he read a carefully prepared statement dealing with the problems of artillery, machine guns, rifles, shells and ammunition generally. So far as rifles are concerned, a full supply for all the training camps will be ready for distribution in ten days, and each soldier in camp should have one by February. The old controversy over the Lewis machine gun was thrashed over, but it was brought out that 41,000 of these guns have been ordered for the aviation corps. The Browning guns have been contracted for to the amount of 132,000 and deliveries will begin in April. When attention was called to the shortage existing in the cantonments now of machine guns for training purposes and that 1,400 Lewis guns were already in stock that might be used, the general replied that these were held for emergency calls from the aviation service.

The navy also uses a good many Lewis guns in its service. There seems no doubt in the minds of any who heard the testimony of both men that there is a bitter spirit of antagonism between Lewis and Crozier, but if the Browning gun is all that its supporters claim General Crozier may yet stand vindicated. When he was asked further about the statement he made at the last hearing that he was not responsible for the shortage of machine guns for the training camps and that the Secretary of War was, it developed that there was after all but slight differences between the programme of General Crozier and that carried out by Secretary Baker, some delay having been caused by the Secretary's insistence that the Lewis gun should have a fair trial.

The Commerce Committee

INVESTIGATION of shipping problems continues before this committee, curiosity being stimulated by Bainbridge Colby's testimony, behind closed doors, concerning the submarine peril and the success in meeting it. Another witness, Raymond B. Stevens, of the Shipping Board, refuted an attempt to connect his name with a favored contractor by producing a letter from General Goethals showing that Goethals was solely responsible for the contract. The incident served to bring out the fact that Stevens always sided with Goethals in the unfortunate controversy with Denman, whose appointment to the board and subsequent selection as chairman was the main cause of the confusion and delay that have done so much injury to ourselves and our allies. The appointment of Goethals by Secretary Baker virtually to succeed Sharpe in the Quartermaster General's Department restores a great man to the service of his country. His taking over of the Bush Terminals in New York for army purposes was a characteristic stroke.

The House Committee on Interstate Commerce will have small difficulty in drafting the necessary legislation for the national railways plan or of passing it through the House. The death of Senator Newlands, late chairman of the Senate committee, is a loss in itself, for Newlands, while not a man of commanding ability, was a painstaking student of any problem that interested him.

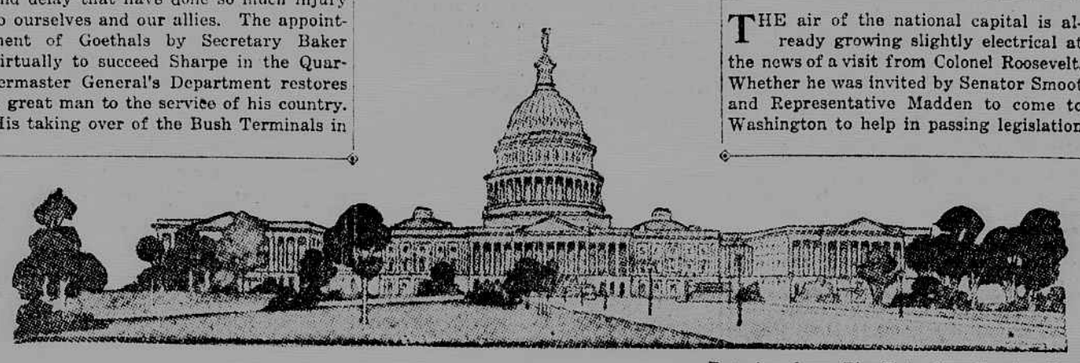
The seniority rule will give the chairmanship of this important committee, doubly important now, to Ellison Duran Smith, of South Carolina. Smith is not a lawyer, and many contend that he could never have become a good lawyer. The questions that come before this committee are mainly those dealing with nice legal and constitutional points relating to the important commerce clause of the Constitution. In the handling of such questions Smith, of South Carolina, could only be considered a joke, at least this is one view taken in Washington. Pomerene, of Ohio, is the member who ranks next to Smith, and there has been some talk of a contest for the chairmanship, but the Democratic steering committee will be slow to change the seniority rule. If, as was once suggested by a former steering committee, the election of a chairman were left to the members of the committee neither Smith nor Pomerene would be considered when it was possible to elect Robinson, of Arkansas, or Underwood, of Alabama.

It was perhaps in view of the Smith incumbency that McAdoo sent for Cummins, ranking minority member, to consult with him about the necessary legislation. The lines are already being drawn in the Senate over the question whether the average net revenue of the three last years is not too high a sum for the government to guarantee the railroads.

But the President can paraphrase the remark of one of his predecessors concerning the Panama Canal: "I have taken over the railroads and Congress can debate the accomplished fact."

Roosevelt to the Rescue

THE air of the national capital is already growing slightly electrical at the news of a visit from Colonel Roosevelt. Whether he was invited by Senator Smoot and Representative Madden to come to Washington to help in passing legislation or, as Smoot made haste to explain, the matter of his coming was "incidentally mentioned" while he was on a visit to Oyster Bay, the absorbing question remains, What will he do when he comes? Can he possibly observe the self-denying ordinance of silence of which we have had advance notice? He has announced himself in favor of the Chamberlain bill for universal military service and has made some editorial comments, slightly unfavorable, upon the attitude of Secretary Baker, as reflecting that of President Wilson, toward that subject.



—Drawing from *The Saturday Evening Post*

At the present moment the bill would seem to have not a ghost of a chance in the House, and it is likely that the Senate, with a knowledge of that fact, will be reluctant to engage in a long discussion of a moot question, to say nothing of the sentiment that universal service will add not a single soldier to the ranks in this present war, the draft measure taking care of enlistment.

But if the Colonel really wishes to have a test of strength with the Administration on that issue, there may be an electrical storm here that will charge the atmosphere to the remotest bounds of the Republic. If he could persuade the Republican party to commit itself to that as an issue, the measure would probably pass both houses of Congress with the aid of its Democratic supporters. But can he?

Swelling the Staff

TO ALREADY overcrowded Washington the Civil Service Commission has given notice that some 15,000 more government employes may be expected in the next three months. The housing question has become so acute that President Wilson has appropriated $1,000 a month to the District Council of Defence for the work of registering houses, apartments and rooms for rent to government employes. The council, in turn, has recommended that the government build temporary barracks and erect buildings for restaurants for the accommodation of government workers, and this will probably be done at an early date.

January Peace Talk

IT IS only natural, in the month succeeding the Christmas festivities, one which by its name looks backward and forward, named for the old Roman deity, the doors of whose temple were closed only when there was peace throughout the Roman empire, that there should be much thought and the expression of many ideas concerning peace. This would be the case, independent of the peace gestures the Kaiser is making toward the Bolsheviki and of the announced conference on the subject between Lloyd George and Clemenceau.

In Administration circles at Washington one is reminded of the determination, expressed in more than one of the President's utterances, not to make terms of peace with the present war-lords of Germany, whose word cannot be trusted, whose honor cannot be appealed to, the violators of treaties and the breakers of covenants. Until the situation in Germany is changed to one in which conditions of peace may be discussed with officials not already convicted of treachery and mendacity, to say nothing of beastliness and barbarism, there can be no peace. This is the Washington view.

Those who want a restatement of peace terms every other day, by the United States or Great Britain or France, are invited to consider first with whom covenants of peace can be made or terms of peace discussed. For President Wilson, the present rulers of Germany are beyond the pale.